

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-12 OMB-01
TRSE-00 OC-06 CCO-00 A-01 OPR-02 AID-05 CA-01
SCS-06 /117 W

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O 121925Z JUL 78

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9922

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NY

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 1921

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MR

SUBJ: COUP D'ETAT IN MAURITANIA: SITREP 3

REF NOUAKCHOTT 1880 (NOTAL)

1. AS OF 1800Z JULY 12, SITUATION IN NOUAKCHOTT REMAINS CALM
WITH PERMANENT MILITARY CHECKPOINTS REDUCED TO KEY POINTS AROUND
THE PRESIDENCY, AIRPORT, MAJOR ARTERIES AND A FEW EMBASSIES,
INCLUDING THIS ONE. AIRPORT REOPENED FOR BUSINESS, BOTH DOMES-
TIC AND INTERNATIONAL, JULY 12, AND AIR MAURITANIA RESCHEDULED
SEVERAL INTERNAL FLIGHT MISSED DURING PERIOD AIRPORT
CLOSED. FRONTIERS ALSO OPEN. GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED DAILY
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NEWSPAPER CHAAB REAPPEARED JULY 12 WITH PHOTOS AND BIOGRAPHIES OF
NEW MEMBERS OF MILITARY COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL RECOVERY (CMRN).
CIVILIAN SOURCE CLOSE TO CMRN REPORTED CURFEW WOULD APPARENTLY
CONTINUE FOR FEW DAYS, BUT THAT ALL REMAINED CALM.

2. BEYOND CABINET MINISTERS, NUMBER OF PERSONS ARRESTED
BELIEVED LOW AND SAME HIGHLY PLACED CIVILIAN SOURCE JUST

QUOTED ASSERTS THAT NO REPRISALS WILL BE TAKEN. FORMER MINISTER OF PARTY AND ISLAMIC AFFAIRS IS SAID TO HAVE SOUGHT ASYLUM AT THE CHINESE EMBASSY. (HE IS BELIEVED TO HAVE GIVEN HIMSELF UP SUBSEQUENTLY.) SOURCE OBSERVING ARREST OF PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY-GENERAL ALI CHERIF SAID DETENTION WAS CARRIED OUT IN ALMOST CORDIAL MANNER. ONE TIME DEFENSE MINISTER M'BARECK IS ALSO UNDER DETENTION, AND WHEREABOUTS OF COMMANDER OF SEVENTH MILITARY REGION ARE UNKNOWN.

3. REGIME HAS BEGUN BUILDING INSTITUTIONS. ON EVENING JULY 10, RADIO MAURITANIA ANNOUNCED NAMES OF 18 OFFICERS MAKING UP CMRN. AMONG THEM WERE HEAVY MAJORITY OF MAURITANIA'S ARMY FIELD GRADE OFFICERS. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, 15-MAN CABINET, INCLUDING 7 MEMBERS OF CMRN, IN ADDITION TO 8 CIVILIANS, ALSO ANNOUNCED. FINALLY, GROUP OF 22 PROMINENT MAURITANIANS WHO ANNOUNCED THEIR SUPPORT FOR NEW REGIME, IS EXPECTED TO SERVE AS ADVISORY BODY IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE. ONE OF LAST GROUP, NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL AND MINING COMPANY DIRECTOR GENERAL ISMAEL OULD AMAR, HAS STATED PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY THAT REGIME'S POLITICAL ORIENTATION WILL BE LIBERAL WITH STRONG EMPHASIS ON FREE ENTERPRISE.

4. EXTERNAL POLITICAL CONTACTS OF NEW REGIME HAVE BEEN LIMITED. MOROCCAN ELDER STATESMAN REDA GUEDIRA, PROBABLY ACCOMPANIED BY COLONEL DLIMI, ARRIVED NOUAKCHOTT JULY 10. AMBASSADOR KRYZA HAS BEEN INVITED TO MEET WITH PRESIDENT JULY 12. CONFIDENTIAL

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5. MAURITANIANS WERE SUMMONED THROUGHOUT DAY BY RADIO ANNOUNCEMENTS AND A ROVING PA SYSTEM, TO A RALLY IN SUPPORT OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT THE AFTERNOON OF JULY 12TH. A LARGE CROWD OF ALL AGES, RACES AND BOTH SEXES GATHERED AT THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICES SHOUTING QUOTE VIVE L'ARMEE UNQUOTE UNTIL MOUSTAPHA APPEARED AT THE GATES. AFTER WAVING AND SMILING AT CROWD FOR 20 MINUTES, AND WITHOUT MAKING ANY STATEMENT, MOUSTAPHA HEADED BACK TO PRESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS, WHILE THE CROWD LISTENED TO EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR THE COUP LEADERS FROM MAURITANIANS OF A VARIETY OF BACKGROUNDS. IN SIMILAR EFFORT AT BUILDING UP OWN IMAGE, REGIME HAS BROADCAST LONG LISTS OF MAURITANIAN CITIZENS WHO HAVE EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR NEW GOVERNMENT. KRYZA

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